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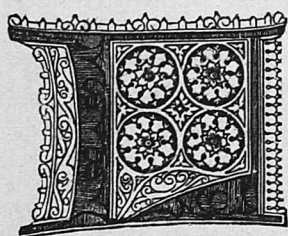
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ART NEEDLEWORK

A LESSON IN OLD POINT-LACE.



LACE-MAKING in imitation of "old point" is the most recent fashion in art-needlework. In our supplement this month will be found the copy of a beautiful specimen of old point-lace, taken by means of photography from the original in the South Kensington Museum. By the aid of the skeleton diagram which accompanies it, the amateur at all proficient in lace-making will understand at a glance how to reproduce the specimen with needle and thread. But as we desire that our instructions in this branch of art needlework shall especially be useful to novices, we will assume that the reader knows nothing about the subject and proceed to give the fullest details for a first lesson in lace-making, availing ourselves freely of the experience of Miss Daisy Waterhouse Hawkins, of London, as given in her capital little book on lace-making.

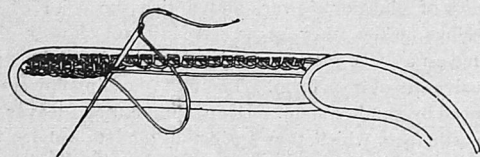


Fig. 1.

Having procured the necessary materials, viz., linen thread, linen lace braid, cord and good needles, select a braid of the width indicated by the pattern, and tack it firmly on to the pattern between the parallel lines. Where a fulness is caused at either edge of the braid by the curves, whip over the edge of the braid, and thus draw it to the shape. Where two braids come in contact, sew them finely but firmly together by the outer threads.

All the varied stitches with which the scrolls are filled, and all the bars or "brides" are produced by button-hole-stitch, worked (as in embroidery) from left to right, and each row below the other. Bearing this rule in mind, it is easy for every worker to originate fresh varieties of stitches during the progress of her work.

Venetian or Spanish Rose Point is to be copied without the introduction of any braid. A series of threads (or if preferred a fine cord) should be tacked on to the pattern, following the exact outline of every scroll, and afterwards sewn over, the intervening space being filled entirely with button-hole-stitch. Attach a needleful of thread firmly to the outline threads or cord at the right-hand side, carry it tightly across the space to the left-hand side and attach it there, then work a row of button-hole-stitch very small and even, taking each stitch through the outline of the scroll, and including in it the thread that is fastened across. Continue to work other rows in the same manner until the scroll is filled up. Observe that these rows of stitches generally run in a horizontal direction with regard to the whole

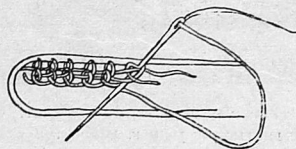


Fig. 2.

piece of lace, as though the work had been executed as far as possible whilst retaining it in its ultimate intended position towards the beholder.

Another method of rendering this filling-in stitch still more close and perfect is to be seen in Fig. 2. After fastening the thread across, and working the first row of close button-hole-stitch over it, form the second and subsequent rows by taking each stitch through the close threads of each stitch in the row above, instead of through the loops between the stitches. This causes the stitches to be more square and firm, but in very fine work it adds considerably to the time and care occupied. It will of course be understood that in all

these diagrams the stitches are greatly magnified and separated in order to make the working intelligible. After practising the foregoing stitches, Fig. 3 will easily be understood without further explanation and after working that, the fair lace-maker will perceive that by increasing the number of stitches to four or five and shortening the loops, a chessboard pattern is produced; and that by shortening the stitches and lengthening the loops a dotted network is made. Another variety is shown in Fig. 4. Work a loose button-hole-stitch all round the interior of the scroll; for second and subsequent rows, take each stitch through the loop above, and then knot it, by passing the needle a second time through the same loop, and drawing it tight before commencing another stitch. This construction may again be changed by working the second row and knots between the two threads of the button-hole-stitch, as shown in Fig. 5; but for this square network it is necessary to make the loops much longer than in any of the stitches previously described. Bars or "brides" are made by working very tight button-hole-stitches round one thread (or more) that has been fastened across from one scroll to another. If bars are required broad and flat, fasten two or more threads across, and then darn them together instead of button-hole-stitching.

OUR ART-NEEDLEWORK DESIGNS.

THE design of cat-tails and marigolds for a lambrequin or bracket strip, shown in Plate III of our supplement, it will be noticed is made to match the design for a portière strip given in the supplement

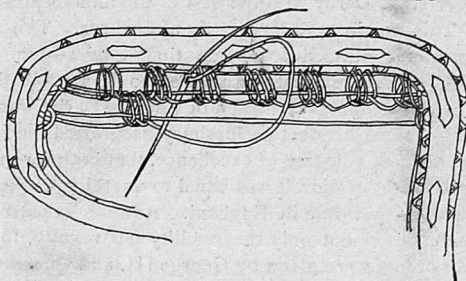


Fig. 3.

of our first number. We would have stated then, had we been informed of the fact when we purchased it, that the latter was original with Mrs. C. Wheeler, Vice-President of the New York Society of Decorative Art, the impress of whose excellent taste is now found on very many articles of furniture and decoration in daily use. Indeed, it may safely be said that no one person has done more practical service toward advancing the objects of the society in improving the artistic taste of the community than has this lady, and she is most ably seconded by Miss Wheeler, her daughter.

But little explanation of the designs in Plate IV is necessary. Those skilled in art-needlework will see at once that most of them are made to be worked in satin stitch. Any of the designs, however, can also be done in outline by plain back-stitching in silk or fast-colored embroidery cotton, which can be obtained at any of the better class of notion stores.

The monograms given in Plate IV have been chosen at the individual requests of some of our readers, and, in presenting them, we wish to say that regular subscribers to THE ART AMATEUR are at liberty to send us such combinations of letters as they desire for their own monograms, and we will cheerfully furnish the designs in the succeeding issues of our magazine free of charge. Of course only a limited number of these can be given each month, and applications will have to be taken in the order they are received. By this means we do not doubt that in a little while, by reference to our files, any combination of two letters may be had.

HOW TO WASH LACE.

WASHING valuable lace should be a labor of love. Time and patience are important requisites to do it well, and it comes especially within the province of the

gentlewomen who possess it. A long wooden board, say two yards by one, will be necessary for deep flouncings. For smaller pieces, one yard by half a yard will suffice, but the larger size is preferable, as several pieces can be cleaned on it at the same time. The board must be covered with thick flannel and slightly stuffed, to form a sort of cushion. A good supply of fine long lace pins with small round heads will be required, as well as an ivory punch or an ivory knitting needle, with a round point, a lobster's claw, or a dog's tooth. Before washing, the yellow stains sometimes observable in old laces should be removed by placing the discolored portion on a hot iron, covered with linen moistened with a solution of oxalic acid; the lace should afterwards be steeped in lukewarm water. Tepid water expels the starch or stiffening, hot water shrinks the thread, whilst cold water sets the dirt. Having well soaked the lace, wash it in a lather of the purest white soap and lukewarm water. This must be done with great delicacy of touch, and rubbing must not be at-

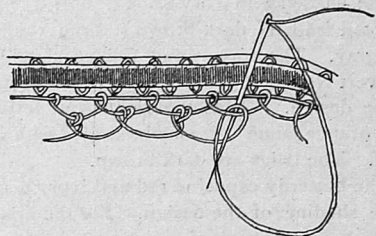


Fig. 4.

tempted; it must be merely dabbed or patted, and pressed between the hands gently to and fro in the water. When the dirt is well out, rinse it several times in lukewarm water, and if any stiffness is required pass it through water just sweetened with the finest sugar-candy. In drying, the moisture must be expelled by gentle pressure; hand-wringing must never be resorted to for any of the finer makes of lace. Net should be washed in a lather of fine soap and warm water, then dipped in water very slightly blued, and again dipped in either sugar and water, weak starch, or gum arabic and water. It must be pinned out to dry after being well clapped with the hand. This clapping is one of the great secrets of clear-starching. Nothing clears nets, muslins, etc., better, for it removes the sticky portion of the stiffening matter without lessening its crispness. Net should be ironed on the wrong side with a very hot iron, which brings up the stiffness; but ironing renders tarlatan limp.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMER WORK.

By the time the present number of THE ART AMATEUR reaches our lady readers in their summer retreats many of them, doubtless, will already be engaged upon crewels and crash, devising articles of embroidery to be used for decoration on their return home in the fall, and many, probably, are already at work on intended Christmas presents or contribu-

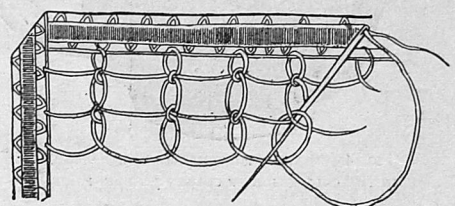


Fig. 5.

tions to church fairs. Perhaps some suggestions for the application of the fashionable embroidery work may be acceptable.

Anti-macassars, or "tidies," for a long time made exclusively in white cotton crochet and knitting, are executed now in crash or coarse towelling. Then there are cushions—apparently the favorite objects for embroidery decoration—dress-pockets, footstools, curtains, chairs, lambrequins, and portières. Curtains usually only have the borders embroidered, but portières are sometimes embroidered all over. The reason for this is that a full light often falls on the latter, whereas only the

edges of window-curtains are exposed to the light. Miniature curtains, such as are hung over the open shelves of cabinets and étagères, may be embroidered to match the window-curtains and portière, but should be of richer material and more elaborately worked, for they are for closer inspection. Standing screens in frames, banner screens, and miniature banner screens on gilt stands, to keep the light of a lamp from the eyes, are good objects for embroidery decoration. The miniature screens should be of rich silk, tastefully lined and artistically finished.

Crash, linen, and cretonne appliqué are most appropriate materials for bedroom decoration. Toilet covers, toilet mats, night-dress cases, bed-covers, and watch-pockets afford abundant material for the clever needlewoman.

For presents and fairs there are suitable for embroidery a host of such articles as penwipers, sachets, scent-bags, smoking-caps, tobacco-pouches, letter-cases, tea-cosies, doyleys, and five-o'clock tea-cloths.

Working aprons of white linen, made with a bib, are embroidered in crewels, and look very pretty. Children's summer dresses in crash and twilled cotton may with propriety be embroidered in crewels, but only one color in one or two shades should be used.

Crewel work may also be suitably applied to pony phaeton carriage-wraps made of crash, the embroidery running around the edges, which afterwards are bound together with the lining with strong braid of a color harmonizing with that of the embroidery. The crash should be of a dark shade, the colors quiet, and the design some neat pattern of vine, hop, or ivy leaves. Coats for pet dogs are also worked in crewels, in some cases with very gorgeous effect.

LACE-MAKING IN AMERICA.

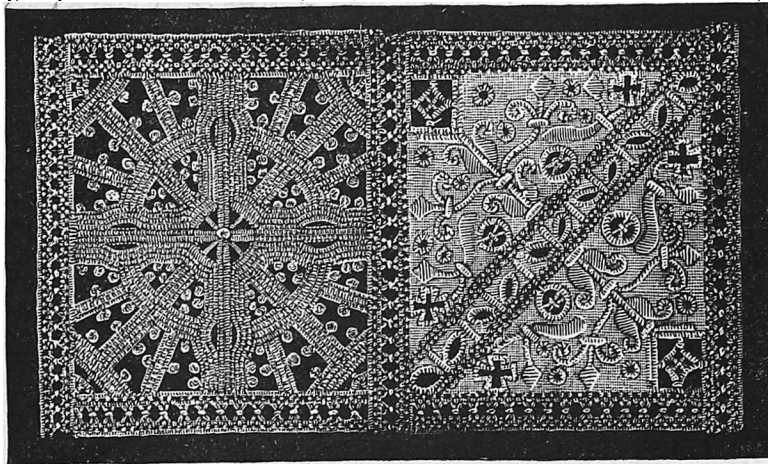
THE only attempt to establish a Lace School in this country that I have met with in the ten years that I have been engaged as a fashion writer and journalist in New York, was that made by Mrs. Esther Carter, a Honiton lace-worker, and a genuine artist and enthusiast in this graceful handicraft, about seven years ago. Mrs. Carter's enterprise has been only partially successful. But the various specimens of pillow and point lace that I have seen grow into art forms of the rarest type in her hands and those of her pupils convince me that of all the arts which sprang into new life in Europe in the thirteenth century, this beautiful and truly feminine one is destined, in course of time, to reach a wondrous degree of perfection in this country.

In the small room where I first found this lady and her students at work, I saw in their hands productions of not only most of the modern laces of Europe, but also reproductions of the rarest old points of Venice, Alençon and Argentan—even some pieces of that wondrous old lace, point d'Angleterre, whose origin it is impossible to discover.

The only genuine piece of old point d'Angleterre that probably ever came to America was among the laces of that Russian lady, Madame Fraloff, who lost a fabulous amount of laces, all of them her personal wardrobe effects, on her way from New York to Niagara, several years ago. A barbe of point d'Angleterre left by the Russian lady after her departure for Europe supplied the design from which Mrs. Carter's specimen of old point d'Angleterre was made.

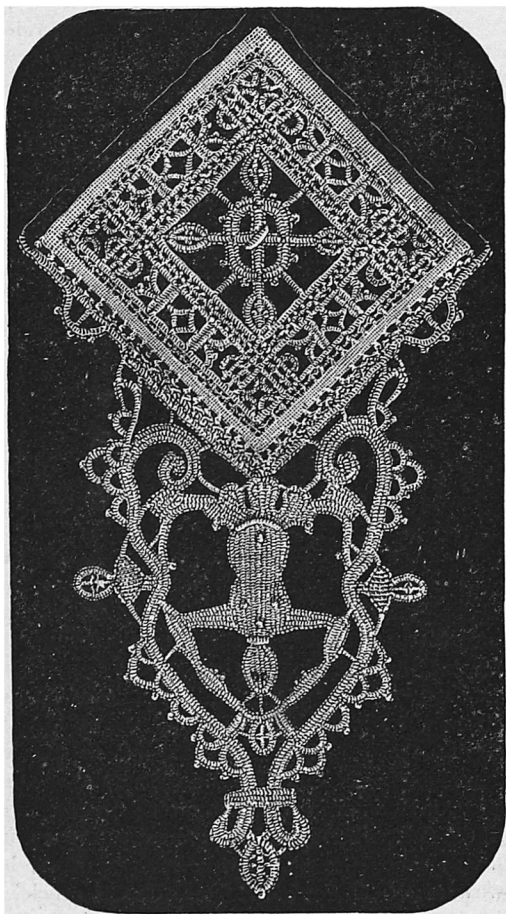
However, it must not be supposed that all the work done in America in the way of lace-making is of so high an artistic value as the piece I mention for corroboration of my theory. Most of the laces produced as yet in this country are crude performances compared with the works of the finest lace artists of Europe. For the best examples of what Europe has produced in lace of late years, the reader is referred to two specimens in the lace department of A. T. Stewart & Co. They were made expressly for the ex-Empress Eugénie, and are probably the most remarkable as well as perfect examples of high art in lace that have ever been known. One of these pieces is a dress, the other is a shawl. The last is a colored silk Brussels point shawl, a triangle of creamy white diamond-shaped pieces joined together for a ground, upon which glow the forms, colors, and shades of from

fifty to a hundred flowers of the most gorgeous colors and delicate tints. The web is as fine as the spider's most-attenuated thread, yet as strong and elastic as horse-hair. The colors are as fresh to-day as they



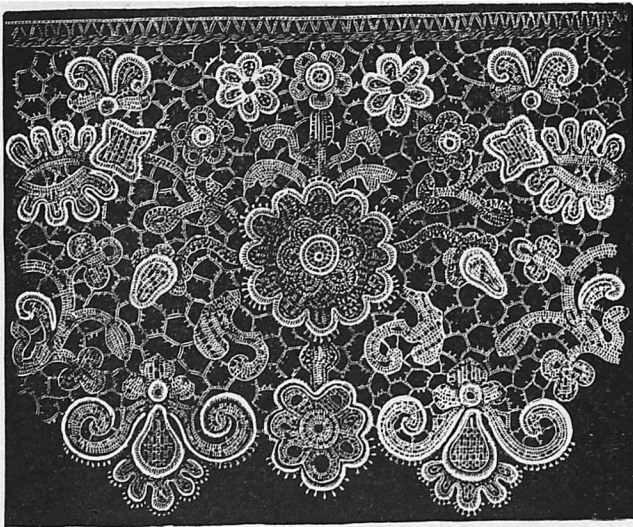
LINEN EMBROIDERY, CUTWORK AND RETICELLI. (LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

were six years ago. In fact, they are as fast as the colors imbedded under the glaze of a piece of Gien faïence—unfading, indestructible. Probably no finer



CARNIVAL LACE. (LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.)

artistic lace production than this will ever again be made in Europe, and centuries must pass ere we can hope to see such a creation in America.



VENETIAN RAISED POINT. (LATE RENAISSANCE STYLE.)

In this country lace-making will not be born of ruder forms of needlework, as it was in Europe. We shall build upon the perfected models of the past in this art, as we hope to do in all other arts. Art is in its infan-

cy in every respect and in every department as yet in America.

As all high art is an emanation of religious feeling, and as no art becomes high until it has ceased to be domestic and has passed as an occupation into the hands of those, as a class, whose souls are deeply imbued with religious affection, so lace-making in this country must pass through gradations, as it did in Europe, ere perfection of design, form and execution can be attained.

I claim for the beautiful art of lace-making that it is as truly an emanation of religious affection in the feminine artist soul, which found no other method of expression than the work of the needle and lace pillow, as that the productions of the pencils of Fra Angelico, Fra Bartolomeo Guido and Michael Angelo are the productions of high art. Corroborative of my position are the specimens of lace and open cut works, ticellas, and drawn works illustrating this paper, with the dates attached to each specimen. It will be seen that the highest forms of beauty were produced at the period

when religious enthusiasm was at its highest point in Europe. And, arguing from analogy, I reasonably conclude that when centuries have swept over this continent, obliterating some marks of civilization only to produce others, that then, when imitative art shall almost have expired, then, and only then, will come the birth of real high art in America, and along with it a renaissance of lace lore, the perfection of that art which has given two lace saints to Europe—one Catholic, the other Protestant—Saint François Regis and Barbara Uttman, *née* Etterlain, the first lace-worker of the Saxon Hartz Mountains, who, if she is not canonized by ecclesiastical law, certainly is, at least, in the memory of those famous haunted mountains in Germany. In the old town of Annaberg Barbara sleeps, while her descendants come from year to year to read the inscription engraved upon her humble tomb:

"Here lies Barbara Uttman. Died 14 January, 1575, whose invention of lace made her the benefactress of the Hartz Mountains.

"An active mind, a skilful hand,
Bring blessings down on the Fatherland."

EMILY V. BATTEY.

ART needlework, in many respects not unlike what our fashionable ladies are now doing, must have been extensively practised by the Jews in the days of the Bible. They probably first learned it in Egypt, where much of their civilization was acquired. We have a detailed description of the embroidery of the Ark; and the chief embroiderer, Aholia, is mentioned by name, "a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen." The curtains of the Tabernacle were of fine-twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, and embroidered with cherubim of "cunning work." The sacerdotal garments of Aaron and his son were also richly decorated: "Upon the hems pomegranates of blue and purple, scarlet and twined linen." "And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe."

Tyre was noted for its art-needlework productions. The prophet Ezekiel apostrophizes it in these words: "Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making; they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, and purple and brodered work, and fine linen, and coral and agate." "Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. Haran and Cannech, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmal, were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue cloths and brodered work, and chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise." That Tyre also imported art needlework is shown by the following: "Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadedst forth to be thy sail; and blue and purple from the isles of Elisha was that which covered thee." The pillows and cushions which the prophet denounces here were probably very similar in design, if not in execution, to those now found in our fashionable drawing-rooms. In the song in which Deborah celebrates the victory over Sisera, she makes the mother of Sisera exclaim, "Have they not sped? Have they not divided their prey? . . . to Sisera a prey of divers colors, of divers colors of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil."

PLATE I.

[See Page 38.]

PHOTOGRAPHIC COPY OF A SPECIMEN OF ITALIAN ROSE POINT LACE.



PATTERN FOR COPYING ITALIAN ROSE POINT, WITH NEEDLE AND THREAD.

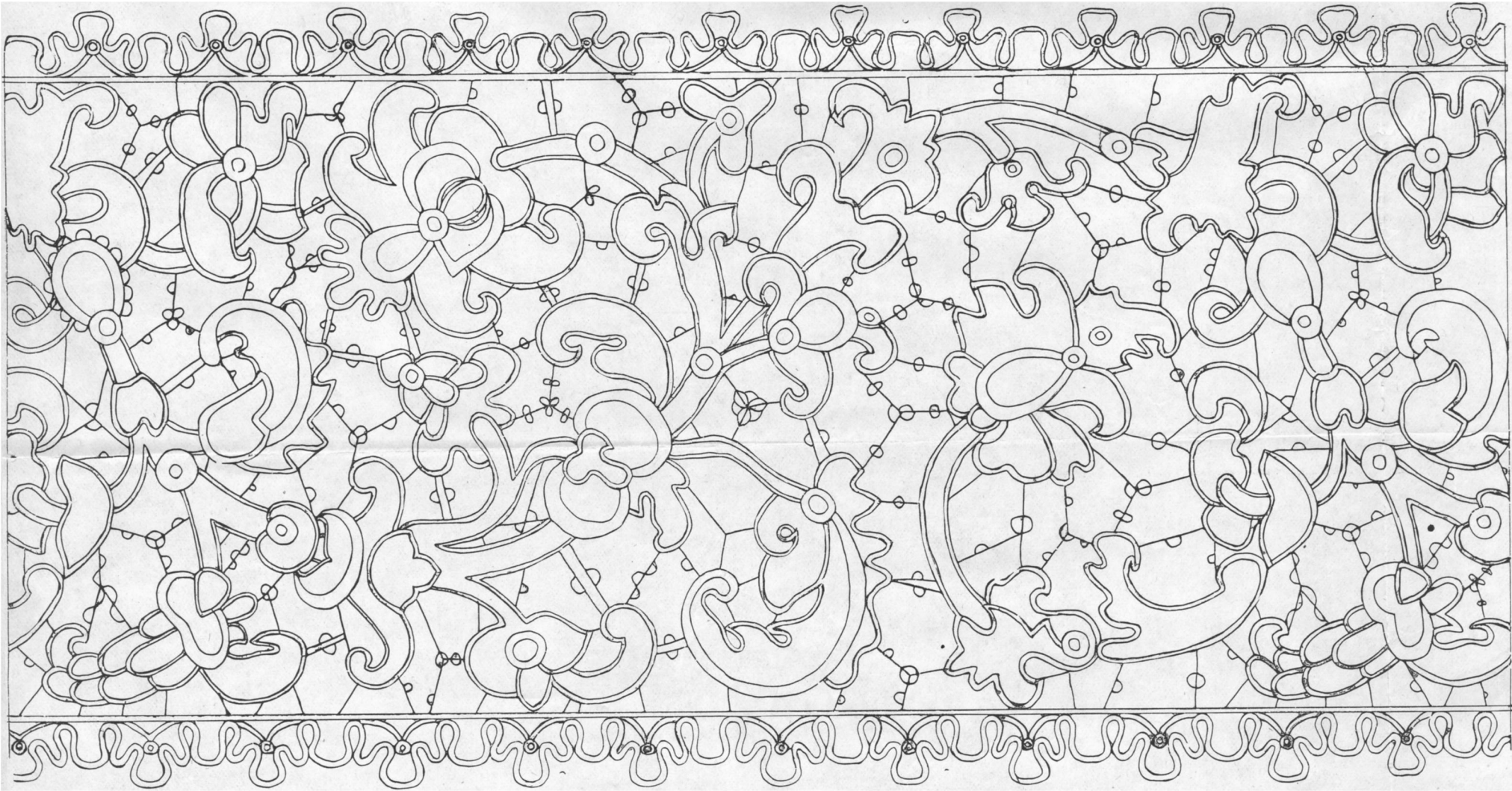


PLATE III.

[For Description, see Page 38.]

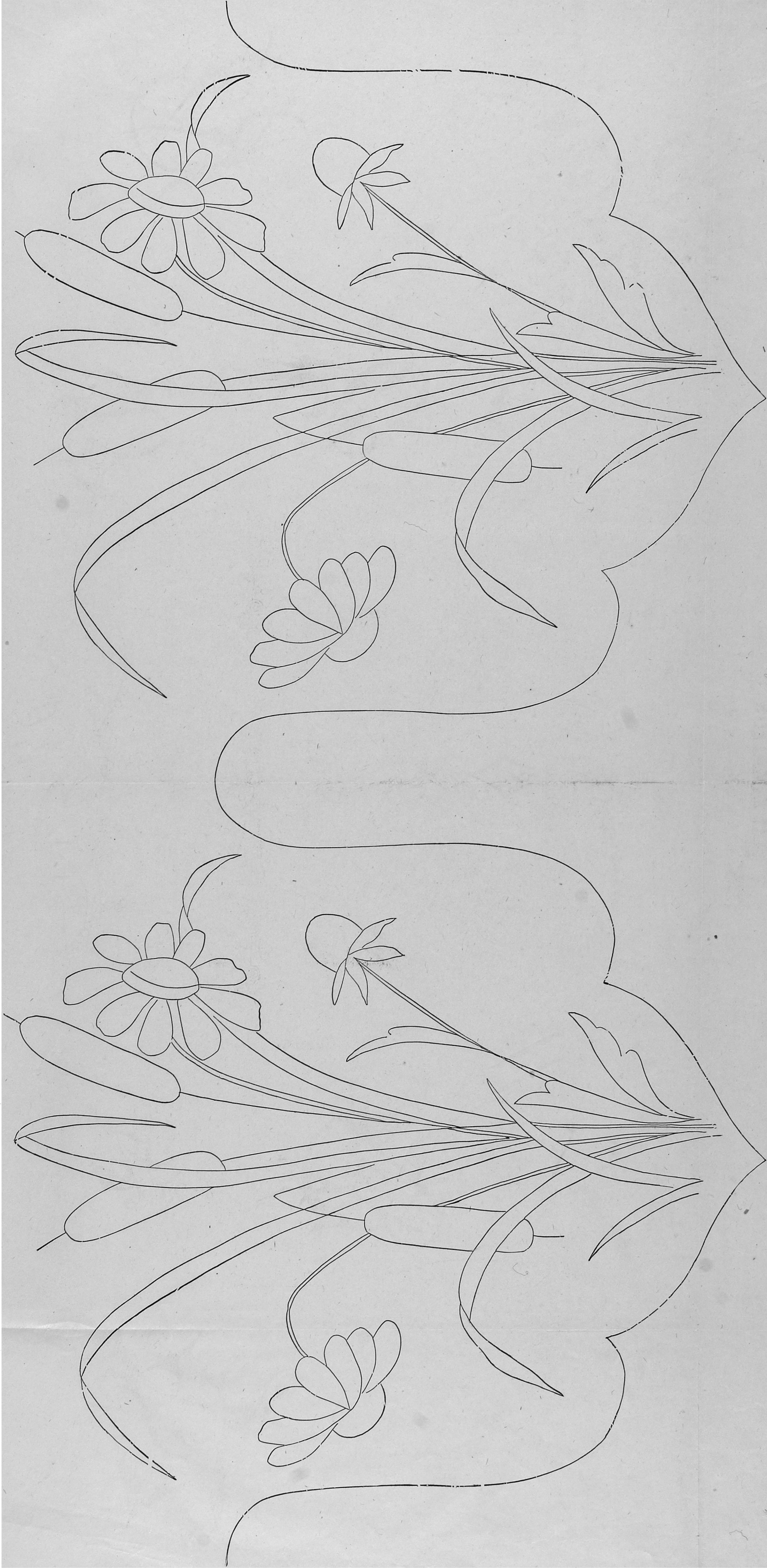


PLATE IV.

[For Description, see Page 38.]

